

GOVERNMENT FOOLED BY FAKE VAN RUYSDAEL

Trying to Catch Art Importers
at Fraud, It Gets
Nipped.

SCANDAL GROWS WORSE
Imitating Old Masters Now a
Profitable Work for
Artists.

Special Correspondence to THE SUN.
ROME, Dec. 4.—The scandal of the fake Van Ruyssdael is bound to assume important proportions and lead to litigation and possibly a trial; consequently it is worth while giving the story in detail.

On November 24 the Ministry of Public Instruction issued the following statement: "In August, 1911, the exportation office of Rome exercised the right of preemption, recognized in article 8 of the law of June 20, 1909, over a painting attributed to Jakob Van Ruyssdael. As the authenticity of this painting is now doubted by the members of the above office, viz., the Frederick Hermann, Signor Pietro d'Achardi and Signor Lionello Venturi, with a praiseworthy sense of correctness have written a letter to the Minister of Public Instruction confirming their decision about the authenticity of the painting and at the same time asking that the painting should be examined by competent experts.

If the painting is not genuine or else if it costs less than the price paid for it the members of the exportation office bind themselves to purchase at their own expense and present to the State another painting of equal value to the one in question."

Article 8 of the law of June 20, 1909, runs as follows:

"The exportation of any object of great archaeological, historical or artistic interest is prohibited. The owner of such objects who intends to have them exported must apply for permission to the exportation office and three members of this office will examine under their own responsibility and declare whether such exportation is allowed. The State has the right to purchase such objects at the price declared by the owner when applying for an exportation permit."

Naturally the law regulating the exportation of works of art from Italy is intended to allow the State every facility to acquire at a low price valuable objects and especially paintings. In fact when the exportation permit is granted such a high tax has to be paid by the owner, 25 per cent on the value declared, that exportation is hardly profitable.

Art dealers, however, found a good system to evade the law and to lower the tax. As a rule, when they apply for an exportation permit, they declare that the object to be exported is of a very low value. Occasionally the members of the exportation office are taken in, since they assume that a painting is not of great intrinsic value if the owner is willing to sell it at a low price and they grant the exportation permit. The owner of course willingly pays the tax on the low value he declared and arranges to sell the picture abroad at ten or twenty times the price he declared to the exportation office.

The fine arts officials, after having been deceived in this way several times, decided in turn to deceive the first owner of a painting who attempted to evade paying a high tax, and when an art dealer submitted an old painting for exportation and valued it at only \$2,000 despite the fact that he attributed it to Jakob Van Ruyssdael, whose works are worth over \$20,000, they seized the opportunity and exercised the right of preemption sanctioned by law.

The art dealer feigned to be very much disappointed. He grumbled a great deal but pocketed the \$2,000 and went away loudly complaining against the unjust law. The Minister of Public Instruction warmly congratulated the members of the exportation office on their shrewdness and praised them for securing a masterpiece to the nation at such a low price.

It is well known throughout Italy that many painters make a profitable trade in imitating old paintings and selling them abroad as authentic. There are painters who specialize in imitating not only the works of Botticelli, but even the frames in use at his time, and the demand for old masters is so considerable that even foreign painters, both in Italy and abroad, are busy faking old paintings which they sell to art dealers here on purpose for exportation.

This art of faking old pictures has not only progressed and extended but reached a degree of utmost perfection so that even experts experience a considerable amount of difficulty in ascertaining whether a work is false or authentic. Very often instead of imitating an old master or painting a replica of some celebrated painting, so-called adaptations are made.

A worthless but genuinely old painting is taken and improved to such an extent as to render it a real work of art. It is stated that many alleged old masters in foreign museums are mere clever adaptations. The painter who faked the Van Ruyssdael purchased by the Italian Government is a Russian who made a specialty of imitating Dutch masterpieces. It is not yet known whether the painting in question is a modern copy or an adaptation, since Prof. Cavenaghi, who examined, merely ascertained that it is not genuine, but so far has not continued its examination in order to find out whether the canvas is old or new.

Prof. Cavenaghi has a special method to find out whether a painting is old or modern, which consists in what he calls the chemical test. He applies a certain composition of his invention on a painting and allows it to dry. When the painting is old and consequently the colors quite dry this composition adheres to the surface and cannot be removed. On the other hand it is easily peeled off from the surface of modern pictures. In the case of the fake Van Ruyssdael the composition, which is like a thin varnish, was easily removed, and as far as the chemical test is concerned a conclusive proof was afforded that the painting is modern.

Pence Brings Increased Trade.
ASUNCION, Paraguay, Dec. 6.—Official returns of imports show that with a return to peace the value of goods brought into the country has increased 50 per cent within the last thirty days. The people are thoroughly disgusted with revolutions, which have nearly depopulated their country, and are enthusiastic eager to see the establishment of a safe and sane Government.

READY FOR CANAL SERVICE.

French Mail Line Replacing Old
Ships With New.

HONGKONG, Nov. 16.—The management of the Messageries Maritimes, better known as the French Mail, has already inaugurated in a way its Panama Canal route, so far as that is physically possible at this time. This has been done by replacing a number of the older ships in the Marseilles-Far Eastern service by some of its newer ones, the first of which arrived here today. The new ships are the Mongolian, Amazon, Chili and Atlantique, and were all originally intended for the South American east coast trade.

It is learned from a source that has always proved reliable that the French Mail desires to be one of the first lines to organize and put into operation a world grinding service, both of passenger and freight ships. This will contemplate the use of the Suez and Panama canals, the former being used by their vessels going east through the Mediterranean.

Regular ports of call for part of the fleet will include Hongkong, Yokohama and possibly Acapulco, while alternate steamers instead of making Chinese and Japanese ports will call at Manila, Guam and Pago-Pago on their way to Panama, and at La Guayra and Havana on the Atlantic side of the Isthmus.

The new steamers have a displacement of 12,000 tons, are well fitted with all modern improvements, including high power wireless, and have a speed of eighteen knots. They have seven decks, electric passenger elevators, twelve dining rooms and saloons, social hall, music, reading and smoking rooms, accommodations for 750 first and second class passengers.

PITCAIRN ISLAND DWELLERS.

Interesting People Descendants of
Noted "Bounty" Mutineers.

VICTORIA, B. C., Dec. 8.—Round for the South Seas on a cruise, which will last 185 days, H. M. S. Albatross, Commander Brooker, has just sailed from Esquimaux. Among other calls to be made will be on Pitcairn Island, and Commander Brooker took with him clothing, books, &c., for the islanders, the descendants of the Bounty mutineers, who have so few visitors.

The residents of Pitcairn Island are a most interesting people. They are of a light copper color, being descendants of Englishmen who intermarried with natives. Their houses, mostly small cottages of three rooms, are built of lumber sawn by hand from native trees, some of the boards for finishing being secured from passing ships and the tools from kindly ship's carpenters. The men tend their gardens, build boats, fish, &c.

Some grain is grown, but not enough to supply the demands of the islanders and is threshed rudely with flails. The people are of a very religious turn of mind. They built a church many years ago in which is an organ sent to the island by the late Queen Victoria.

The population is about one hundred and fifty in number and the families are so intermarried that the majority of weddings are between cousins. The oldest man on the island is Governor; he is the executive, legislative and judicial branches all in one.

The first settlers were from the ship *Bounty*. The vessel left Spithead in 1787 and in the spring of 1789 Fletcher Christian and three companions broke into the captain's cabin and bound and gagged him, and the master and mates were set adrift in an open boat. They eventually reached land, and the mutineers after various vicissitudes reached Pitcairn Island and founded the colony which now occupies the little Isle.

An inquiry into the causes of this mortality shows that both in men and women diseases of the heart and blood vessels were the registered causes of about one-third of the total deaths in the age period

STRAIN OF MODERN LIFE DECREASES BIRTH RATE

London Medical Officer's Statistics Show Changes in
Fifty Years.

REDUCTION OF MORTALITY
Greatest Falling Off Is Between
Ages of Five and Ten
Years.

Special Correspondence to THE SUN.
LONDON, Dec. 6.—The annual report of the medical officer to the Local Government Board, Dr. Newsholme, offers some interesting comments on the strain of modern life in the great centres of population.

Leading off with statistics of birth and death rates, the report points out that the last fifty years have shown great changes in this regard, as shown in the following table:

| Percentage. | 1861-1871. | 1881-1891. | 1891-1901. |
|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Increase by births. | 27.0 | 27.8 | 34.2 |
| Decrease by deaths. | 24.0 | 22.8 | 20.8 |
| Natural increase. | 13.0 | 15.0 | 13.4 |

The national significance of these figures is unmistakable, says the report. The birth rate may, and unless a change in social outlook occurs probably will, decline to considerably greater extent, but the decline of the death rate is necessarily limited.

The improvement in the death rates has not extended beyond the middle of life, for the more advanced ages enter into it scarcely at all. A series of figures and tables, taken from the reports of the Registrar-General, show for males between the periods of 1841-5 and 1906-10 respectively a reduction of mortality which reaches a maximum of 64 per cent between the ages of 5 and 10 and gradually declines to 8 per cent between 45 and 55, changing in the next two decades of life to a rate increased by 9 and 8 per cent, respectively.

For females the figures are somewhat better, the decrease of death rate between the ages of 45 and 55 being still equal to 15 per cent, and a very small decrease continuing until 85 is reached, but the gain being greatly less than in the earlier decades.

In considering these figures Dr. Newsholme points out that the increase in the death rate among men at ages 45-50, when the period 1841-45 is contrasted with that from 1901 to 1905 inclusive, and the failure during the same period of the death rate in women at the same ages to decline are facts of great social significance.

Two circumstances, he says, have doubtless been largely instrumental in keeping up the death rate to an unnecessarily high one. These are the rapidly increasing aggregation of population in towns and the associated industrial conditions affecting large masses of the population, both male and female.

This conclusion is supported by Dr. Stevenson, who in the annual report of the Registrar-General for 1900 draws attention to the marked degree of correspondence between the ages at which the urban is the highest as compared with rural mortality and the ages at which the English death rate is higher than that of other countries.

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65-85, and that diseases of the respiratory system, including pneumonia, cause in men about one-sixth and in women about one-seventh of the total deaths at these ages, malignant disease rivaling respiratory diseases as the cause of one-seventh of the total mortality at these ages among men and one-fifth of that among women.

The whole question of cancer is being investigated in this and other countries, and the high mortality from diseases of the heart and blood vessels is in part accounted a consequence of rheumatic fever in earlier life.

A large share of it, however, is caused by degenerative changes occurring at the ages 45-55 and 55-65, which form an important anticipation of senility in the tissues. On this subject a lengthy report appears from Dr. Andrews, who is now engaged on an investigation of the question.

SEEKS JAPANESE Y. M. C. A. FUND.
General Secretary Davis of Tokio on
Way to America.

HONOLULU, Nov. 23.—For the purpose of raising the amount necessary for the completion of the building fund for the new Y. M. C. A. building in Tokio, J. Merle Davis, general secretary of the Tokio Y. M. C. A., is on his way to the coast. He said yesterday that he expects to raise the \$30,000 needed in coast cities alone.

"The city of Tokio has offered to sell the Y. M. C. A. a site opposite the Emperor's palace and in the heart of the city for one half its value, providing a suitable building is erected," Mr. Davis said at a Y. M. C. A. meeting last night. "The Japanese have subscribed 51,000 yen, or about \$25,000, for the building and Americans have given \$47,000. The purpose of my present trip to the United States is to raise the \$30,000 necessary to assure the success of the building project."

"Tokio expected to get a new building as a result of the famous White House luncheon several years ago, at which several million dollars was subscribed for Y. M. C. A. buildings in foreign lands. We found out, however, that this money was to be used in erecting buildings in cities where new associations were to be formed and it became necessary for us to conduct an independent building campaign."

"The Tokio Y. M. C. A. never had so favorable an outlook as at present. S. Ebara, president of our association, was created a peer by the late Emperor just before his death. This honor, which came as a recognition of his work through the Y. M. C. A., has helped the Y. M. C. A. greatly. Besides showing the friendly feeling of the Japanese toward the Y. M. C. A. it indicates the changed attitude toward Christianity. The Japanese no longer look upon Christianity as a foreign religion but as one of the permanent religions of their own."

ITALY NOW DOES JUSTICE TO SIGNOR CRISPI'S MEMORY

Letter From Late Statesman
Shows Him Blameless of
Italy's Mistakes.

Special Correspondence to THE SUN.

ROME, Dec. 4.—Italy's foreign policy during the Congress of Berlin in 1878 has been aptly described as being "characterized by enormous intellectual impotence counterbalanced by equal moral feebleness." Italy came out with empty hands from the Berlin Congress after having been forced reluctantly to sanction Austria's occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to renounce any compensation.

Despite the efforts of Signor Crispi, who strove to raise Italian prestige and avert a change in balance of power in the Mediterranean, the same vacillating and untrustworthy policy was followed in later years. Italy lost Tunisia, refused Great Britain's invitation to join in the occupation of Egypt and renounced her claims on Albania, thus practically risking her naval predominance in the Adriatic Sea.

Signor Crispi until after his death was the most abused and most bitterly attacked statesman in Italy. Now full justice has been done to his memory, and it is admitted that had he been allowed a free hand Italy would have gained more than she lost owing to the repeated mistakes and lack of political foresight on the part of his successors.

The following two letters, hitherto unpublished, written by Signor Crispi to his friend Giovanni Codronchi, prove that Italy could have easily acquired Albania had Crispi's advice been followed. The first letter follows:

"The question of Albania is one that must be treated in secrecy and I therefore rely on your prudence. Under the first Depretis ministry Bismarck and Lord Derby offered us Albania as compensation for Austria's occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which we opposed. After the fall of the Depretis Cabinet in January, 1878, Cairoli broke off the negotiations and he even refused to read the correspondence I had on the subject with King Victor Emmanuel. Then during the time I was absent from the Ministry there followed a period of conspiracies against Italy and the Government remained passive. It is too late now to remedy this mistake. They accused me of megalomania and Italy lost a good chance."

"What I wrote to you on the 17th inst. is not complete, since I omitted to give you the reasons why we opposed Austria's occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Italy has her eastern frontiers open and Austria, with the addition of these new provinces, would be stronger than us. We must prevent this at any cost."

"If Austria were to acquire Albania as well, our naval predominance in the Adriatic would be lost just as that in the Mediterranean was lost with the French occupation of Biseria. Fortunately the question is still open, because according to the terms of the Berlin Congress

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you the reasons why we opposed Austria's occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Italy has her eastern frontiers open and Austria, with the addition of these new provinces, would be stronger than us. We must prevent this at any cost."

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